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ABSTRACT

The socioeconomic progress of African Americans appears to be in a stalled state. This study analyzes the progress of African Americans toward parity with Whites over a 15- to 20-year period in the following areas: (1) employment; (2) economic development; (3) education; (4) health; (5) housing; and (6) political empowerment. For individual indicators in each category, the specific measure used is the percentage ratio of African Americans to Whites. In order to gauge overall progress and prospects for the achievement of parity, estimates from a composite "racial parity index" (RPI) were generated that take into account comparative measurements across a range of the individual status indicators. The following findings are reported: (1) parity in unemployment rates may never be achieved; (2) parity in representation in managerial and professional occupations could be achieved by 2039; (3) parity in earnings could be achieved by 2058; (4) parity in average household income could be achieved by 2151; (5) parity in poverty rates could be achieved by 2154; (6) parity in wealth and business development may never occur; (7) parity in high school completion rates could be achieved by 2001; (8) parity in college enrollment rates could be achieved by 2040 and in college completion rates by 2025; (9) parity in average life expectancy could be achieved by 2025; (10) parity in infant mortality rates may never be achieved; (11) parity in home ownership could be achieved by 3148; (12) parity in voter registration rates could be achieved by 1989 and in voting rates by 1994; and (13) parity in representation among elected officials will take a long time. Statistical data are presented in 16 tables. A list of 62 references is appended. (FMW)

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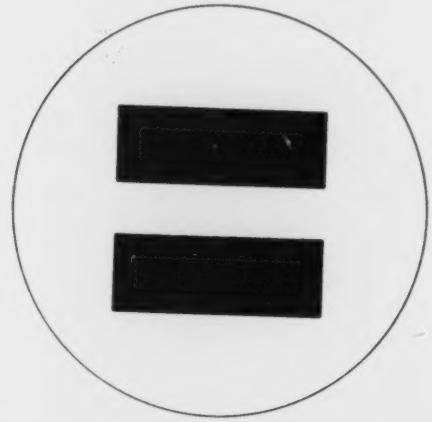

National Urban League, Inc.

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STALLING OUT:
THE RELATIVE PROGRESS
OF
AFRICAN AMERICANS

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August, 1989

STALLING OUT:
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AFRICAN AMERICANS

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This report was inspired by John E. Jacob, President of the National Urban League, who has boldly and articulately challenged the nation to bring about parity status for African Americans by the year 2000. The author has sought to represent the seriousness of this challenge, the urgency of "Parity 2000," in the present document. The actual production of the report was supported by a number of people whose assistance should be acknowledged. I am deeply grateful to Frank Lomax III, Executive Vice President, for his thoughtful guidance throughout and his helpful comments on the draft material. Similarly, the work was aided greatly by the critical input of Betty C. Watson and Dionne J. Jones, senior researchers in the National Urban League Research Department, and Robert McAlpine, Director of the Policy and Government Relations Department. Monica Anderson, a student research intern, is recognized for her assistance in compiling some of the data. Finally, I extend heart felt appreciation to Deborah Searcy for her diligence, proficiency, and forbearance in processing the drafts and the final manuscript. Of course, any errors in the report are solely the responsibility of the author.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since Emancipation, African Americans have been in a protracted struggle to achieve individual and collective well-being in the nation's social and economic life. Given where they started and the obstacles they have confronted along the way, the advancement of African Americans over the intervening generations has truly been impressive. Both in absolute terms and in relation to the majority white population, the present generation of African Americans, overall, is far better off on virtually all critical indicators of quality of life than were earlier generations. There is no doubt that this improvement has benefited the society as a whole as well as African Americans themselves.

On the other hand, despite the long-term advances, African Americans in the contemporary period continue to experience severe disadvantages. They still do not enjoy an equitable share of society's rewards and benefits. The evidence is found in the persistence of pronounced inequalitites between African Americans and whites--in employment, economic development, education, and other vital areas. More disturbing is the fact that the impressive long-term progress of African Americans has in more recent times stalled and, in some cases, even reversed. These conditions are inconsistent with the nation's professed ideals. Further, they threaten to undermine the general

welfare, just as the earlier improvements in racial progress were important to the larger society's growth, viability, and moral leadership in the world.

African Americans are becoming increasingly critical to the nation's success in the changing global economy and political order. Inexorable changes in the demography of the population contribute to this development. Thus, while the growth rate of the majority white population is shrinking, the African American share of the total U.S. population is on the rise. Parelleling these general demographic changes are significant shifts in the racial composition of the nation's workforce. African Americans and other minorities are expected to increase from 2.5 percent of the civilian labor force in 1986 to 26.1 percent in 2000. In the next ten years or so, these groups will supply one out of every three new workers. They could be the decisive human resources of the decades ahead.

Thus, there is a commanding need to overhaul the stalled engine of racial progress so as to alleviate the contemporary American dilemma and its ominous possibilities. Indeed, it is imperative that African Americans finally realize the parity status to which they have so long aspired and to which the society has so long avowed its commitment. This need prompts two questions that are the central focus of the present study:

- At current rates of change, when would Africa Americans gain parity status with the majority white population?

- What annual rate of progress is necessary for African Americans to achieve parity status with whites by the year 2000?

These questions underscore our interest in the relative condition of African Americans as opposed to the absolute progress the group has made from one point in time to another. This is not to de-emphasize the significance of absolute gains. The extent to which the present generation of African Americans is better off than its predecessors is obviously important in its own right. Nonetheless, where African Americans stand vis-a-vis the position of the white majority is a justifiable and escalating concern, which poses different, more complex issues of choice and change. The essence of the matter is embodied in the parity principle, and, thus, this concept provides the sociopolitical focus for the present study.

ILLUSTRATIVE FINDINGS

Employment, Economic Development, and Education

In general, the prospects for achieving racial parity in the critical areas of employment, economic development, and education are bleak. In most instances, the pace of the relative progress of African Americans, as observed from the

middle 1960s to the mid-80s, would not close the remaining disparities for an inordinate amount of time into the next century, if ever. The projections include the following:

1. The disparity between African American and white unemployment rates has been widening. Consequently, racial parity in the incidence of unemployment will not occur, if the observed trend continues.

2. At the observed change rate, African Americans would not gain parity representation in managerial and professional occupations until 2039. More than a tripling of the current pace of progress is needed to reach this goal by the year 2000.

3. In earnings, at the current rate of progress, African American male workers would not achieveparity with their white counterparts until 2058. By contrast, if the pace for African American females were to persist, their average earnings would match those of white female workers by 1993.

4. The difference between the average incomes of African American and white families has been growing, raising the prospect that parity on this measure will not happen. The observed change in the per capita income ratio suggests racial parity on this measure would not occur until 2151. The observed rate of relative progress would have to increase by more than eleven times to reach parity by the year 2000.

5. The racial disparity in poverty rates has been declining, but slowly. At the observed pace of relative progress, the proportion of African American families in poverty would not match that of whites until the year 2154. Gaining parity in poverty rates by 2000 would require accelerating the pace of improvement eleven times.

6. The data indicate that racial parity in wealth status and business development might never materialize, given present conditions.

7. In education, African Americans are on a pace that would bring parity in high school completion rates by the year 2001. Thus,

improvement on this measure has been exceptionally impressive.

8. The proportion of African Americans enrolled in college is projected to match that of whites in 2040. At the observed rate of progress, the likelihood of completing college, once enrolled, would be the same for African American and white students in the year 2025, one generation into the 21st century.

Health and Other Areas

Noteworthy findings with respect to the relative well-being of African Americans in health status and other areas include:

1. As projected, the average life expectancy of African Americans would be equivalent to thatof whites in the year 2025. Among females, the estimated parity year is 2017, while it is 2038 among males. Achieving overall parity in life expectancy would require a rate of improvement that is 2.5 times the observed rate.

2. The racial gap in infant mortality rates has been widening. Again, the data imply that parity would never eventuate if the observed trend continues.

3. In terms of homeownership, the projection is that the parity goal would not be attained until the year 3148. The observed rate of relative progress is 77 times too slow to reach this condition by the year 2000.

4. The racial disparity in both voter registration and voting rates has been declining rapidly. As projected, the remaining difference in registration should disappear in 1989, while parity in voting rates should come about in 1994.

5. The observed trend in the election of African Americans to political office suggest that it will be a long time before racial parity, in terms of proportionate representation, is achieved in this area.

Overall Progress

In order to gauge the overall progress and prospects for the achievement of parity, estimates from a composite "racial parity index" (RPI) were generated. The RPI takes into account comparative measurements across a range of individual status indicators. The results show that, between 1967 and 1985, the overall relative well-being of African Americans deteriorated notably. The RPI statistic slipped from 51.2 in 1967 to 47.1 in 1985. Also, the analysis indicates that the RPI would have to grow (toward 100.0) at an annual rate of 3.5 percentage points in order to reflect the attainment of overall parity in the year 2000.

Measured overall or in terms of individual indicators of well-being, the study shows that the socioeconomic progress of African Americans is at best in a stalled state. To be sure, it has reveals a few welcome signs of sustained advancement that augur well for the years and decades ahead. Some of the findings with regard to educational attainment and electoral activity, for example, are encouraging. No doubt, other measurements, not performed in this study, would also produce gratifying results regarding what has transpired and the possibility of further improvement.

For the most part, however, the story here, like the accounts in other recent investigations, is distressing. The upshot is that parity for African Americans is a distant, elusive goal. The prospect is that the nation's viability in meeting its domestic needs and contending with the mounting

forces of international competition will be dangerously undermined if the projections presented in this report hold. The challenge is to reignite the stalled engine of racial progress before the problem becomes insurmountable.

Most importantly, what is required is a national recommitment to the ideal of racial justice and such reordering of national priorities as might be necessary to bring it to reality. The government, the private sector, and the African American community itself must forge a new partnership dedicated to this end.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Since Emancipation, African Americans have been in a protracted struggle to achieve individual and collective well-being in the nation's social and economic life. Given where they started and the obstacles they have confronted along the way, the advancement of African Americans over the intervening generations has truly been impressive. Both in absolute terms and in relation to the majority white population, the present generation of African Americans, overall, is far better off, on virtually all critical indicators of quality of life, than were earlier generations. There is no doubt that this improvement has benefited the society as a whole as well as African Americans themselves.

On the other hand, despite the long-term advances, African Americans in the contemporary period continue to experience severe disadvantages. They still do not enjoy an equitable share of society's rewards and benefits. The evidence is found in the persistence of pronounced inequalities between African Americans and whites--in employment, economic development, education, and other vital areas. More disturbing is the fact that the impressive long-term progress of African Americans has in more recent times stalled and, in some cases, even reversed. These conditions are inconsistent with the nation's professed

ideals. Further, they threaten to undermine the general welfare, just as the earlier improvements in racial progress were important to the larger society's growth, viability, and moral leadership in the world.

Concern about the contemporary status of African Americans and what it implies for the well-being of the nation as a whole is not new. Thus, the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, in the wake of the violent explosions of discontent in the 1960s, was incisive and compelling in its assessment of the issue and the need for forthright policy action.[1] The Commission's admonition that the nation was moving toward two "separate and unequal" societies was a provocative expression of alarm.

More recently, the disadvantaged condition of African Americans, as the nation's largest racial minority, has been explicitly viewed as a matter of national security as well as an issue of domestic peace and tranquility and moral rectitude.[2] This broadened perspective is grounded in a growing apprehension about the nation's ability to meet the formidable new challenges of the 21st century.

The reality is that African Americans are becoming increasingly critical to the nation's success in the changing global economy and political order. Inexorable changes in the demography of the population contribute to this development. Thus, while the growth rate of the majority white population is shrinking, the African American share of the total U.S. population is on the rise. According to

census projections, by the year 2000 African Americans will comprise 13.1 percent of the population, up from 12.2 percent in 1987.[3] Racial minorities, in general, will move from 15.4 percent of the population to 17.4 percent, while the proportion of white Americans is projected to decline by 1.9 percentage points. Moreover, the white population is aging faster.

Paralleling these general demographic changes are significant shifts in the racial composition of the nation's workforce. African Americans and other minorities are expected to increase from 20.5 percent of the civilian labor force in 1986 to 26.1 percent in 2000. In the next ten years or so, these groups will supply one out of every three new workers.[4] They could be the decisive human resources of the decades ahead.

These trends are sure to have a dramatic impact on the nation's economic future, both domestically and internationally, and its capacity to meet the more taxing demands the new century will bring. The countinuing disadvantages of African Americans set severe limits on the prospects. The Commission on Minority Participation in Education and American Life has pointedly summarized what is at stake:

> If we allow these (racial) disparities to continue, the United States inevitably will suffer a compromised quality of life and a lower standard of living. Social conflict will intensify. Our ability to compete in world markets will decline, our domestic economy will falter, our

> national security will be endangered. In brief, we will find ourselves unable to fulfill the promise of the American dream.5

Thus, there is a commanding need to overhaul the stalled engine of racial progress so as to alleviate the contemporary American dilemma and its ominous possibilities. Indeed, it is imperative that African Americans finally realize the parity status to which they have so long aspired and to which the society has so long avowed its commitment. This achievement requires a sound appreciation of where we are at present, where we are likely to be in the absence of more potent ameliorative strategies, and the types of public and private initiatives that are necessary to accelerate the pace of racial progress before catastrophe occurs. The objectives of the present report speak to these requirements. In particular, the report addresses the following issues:

- At current rates of change, when would African Americans gain parity status with the majority white population?
- What annual rate of progress is necessary for African Americans to achieve parity status with whites by the year 2000?
- What public policy actions and private initiatives are needed to close the contemporary racial parity gap in key areas?

These questions underscore our interest in the relative condition of African Americans as opposed to the absolute progress the group has made from one point in time to

another. This is not to de-emphasize the significance of absolute gains. To the contrary, the extent to which the present generation of African Americans is better off than its predecessors is obviously important in its own right. Nonetheless, where African Americans stand vis-a-vis the position of the white majority is a justifiable and escalating concern, which poses different, more complex issues of choice and change. The essence of the matter is embodied in the parity principle, and thus this concept provides the sociopolitical focus for the present study.

Chapter II presents a brief exposition on the parity concept as it relates to the historical African American experience, reviews relevant works on racial progress, and describes the specific analytic interests and research methodology of the present study. The main empirical analysis is contained in Chapters III and IV. Focusing on selected indicators of socioeconomic well-being, the analysis will measure the relative progress of African Americans as observed over a given time period, project the point at which parity status would be achieved at the observed rate of change, and indicate the amount of annual improvement needed to reach parity by the year 2000.

Chapter V discusses the need for a summary index that can be used to monitor the overall status and advancement of African Americans in parity terms. The value of such an index is demonstrated by comparing the results produced by a basic model applied to two different points in time.

Finally, Chapter VI considers the implications of the study for public policy and private initiative.

II. THE PARTIY CONCEPT: BACKGROUND AND FOCUS

Parity is an elusive concept. For example, the term is often used interchangeably with "equality." While this practice is legitimate for some purposes, it can also be misleading in discussions about the interests of African Americans. These interests have changed in important ways, and parity is the newer concept embodying these changes. Understanding this evolution in perspective is essential to appreciating the full dimensions of the African American experience, the rationale for the present study, and the significance of the questions the study examines.

A. Historical Overview

The end of the slavery era brought with it the promise that African Americans would be able to live, subsist, and progress as a free people, reliant upon their own resourcefulness and the society's express commitment to democratic ideals. In reality, of course, post-slavery status for the masses of African Americans was only marginally removed from the categorical subjugation they had previously endured.[6] Except for the short-lived period of Reconstruction, during which measures to integrate the former slaves into the mainstream of the nation's social, political, and economic life were undertaken, African Americans faced sharply limited opportunity to make a way for themselves. The systematic exclusion and deprivation were enforced by the infamous Black Codes and later by an elaborate system of

legal discrimination that distinguished the Jim Crow South for one hundred years. Racial discrimination was pervasive in the North, too, albeit in less blatant forms. It is only recently in American history that the last vestiges of government sanctioned discrimination were eradicated.

During the extended period of legal discrimination, the dominant preoccupation of African Americans was to realize the freedom in fact to which they were constitutionally entitled in principle--freedom to earn a living in such manner as their talents and abilities allowed, freedom to participate in the democratic processes of governance, freedom to partake of society's amenities according to their means, freedom to progress through self-development, etc. In these fundamental respects, the condition of African Americans was decidedly unequal, subordinate to that of white Americans. The historical record is replete with eloquent protestations against the inequalities--from the provocative writings of W.E.B. DuBois to the poignant exhortations of Martin Luther King.[7]

What is necessary to stress here is that the conception of equality for African Americans primarily centered on equality of opportunity and treatment. Strategies were geared to securing the basic civil rights protections the Constitution provides for all American citizens. In the acquisition of civil rights and the end of legal discrimination lay the hope that African Americans could greatly improve their lot over that of their parents and

grandparents and compete on an equal footing with whites. However, the very success of the Civil Rights Movement revealed that the socioeconomic disadvantages of African Americans were largely built-in, produced by the centuries of legal oppression and sustained by more subtle, institutional forms of racism and discrimination.[8]

This realization brought on a shift in emphasis from the question of basic civil rights to the issue of social and economic justice. It brought a concern with the persistence of white advantage, even despite the absolute progress African Americans had achieved over time. Consequently, it changed the focus from racial equality in rights to equality in quality of life. Parity connotes the latter condition, and the pace of achieving parity status for African Americans has become the overriding issue.[9]

B. Assessments of Relative Well-Being

The voluminous research comparing the condition of African Americans with that of whites has consistently disclosed marked disparities. At the same time, the cumulative findings document substantial, albeit uneven progress toward closing longstanding gaps in well-being. Gunnar Myrdal's seminal work, An American Dilemma, elevated such qualified analysis and is still perhaps the most telling and comprehensive investigation of the relative socioeconomic status of African Americans ever undertaken.[10] His prolific observations remain widely used benchmarks for the measurement of racial progress. Together, they left little

doubt that the path to racial equality was long and uncertain.

In more recent times, the Kerner Commission decried the persistence of inequalities uncovered in its examination of urban unrest in the 1960s, even as it recognized important improvements in the condition of African Americans.[11] The Commission found wide racial disparities in income, employment, occupational attainment, and health status, among other areas. A recent update of the report observes that these differences are in some instances more pronounced now than they were twenty years earlier.[12] This suggestion runs contrary to popular perception. "Because we made progress for a time, most Americans--as well as American policymakers--think that we are still making progress or that most inequalities have disappeared. This is not true."[13]

Based on census data, Farley conducted a far-ranging study of changes in the relative well-being of African Americans between 1960 and 1980.[14] His findings were mixed. In education, for example, the data indicated significant African American advancement on key measures, including years of school completed and college enrollment. Similarly, the racial gap in occupational attainment narrowed. In 1960, African Americans were 10 percent of the workforce but held only 3 percent of the managerial and professional jobs. By 1980, their representation in these categories had grown to 6 percent. On the other hand, African Americans made no progress toward closing the unemployment gap with whites

between 1960 and 1980, nor did the difference in income between the races decline appreciably over the twenty-year period. On balance, Farley's assessment was optimistic, but tempered by the continuation of sizable African American disadvantages on most indicators.

In The Color Line and the Quality of Life in America, Farley collaborated with Walter Allen to complete an exceptionally expansive and indepth analysis of trends in the socioeconomic development and status of African Americans.[15] The study is among the most sophisticated and thorough applications of 1980 census data to date. Their findings disclosed "areas of considerable gain as well as areas of considerable loss." "Black Americans," the researchers go on to say, "continue to be substantially disadvantaged relative to whites in this country."[16]

Smith and Welch, also, rigorously analyzed census data, focusing specifically on the economic progress of African Americans between 1940 and 1980.[17] Although the study concentrated on African American men, the results showed that dramatic gains had been realized across the forty-year time frame, in earnings, income, and employment. For example, the investigation found that while the typical African American male worker earned a mere 43 percent as much as his white counterpart in 1940, this figure had jumped to 73 percent by 1980. Nonetheless, this work, too, revealed a slowed pace of improvement in the latter part of the study period and large racial differences that were yet to be overcome. As the

authors state,

> ...there has been impressive improvement in the relative economic status of blacks over the last forty years. It is a largely untold story that belies widely held views of black stagnation. However, one must remember that even in 1980, black male incomes still lagged well behind those of whites. We are left then with a dual message: Considerable progress has been made in narrowing the wage gap between the races--but race is still an important predictor of a man's income. 18

In an earlier study, Wattenberg and Scammon also concentrated on economic advancement, examining changes during a shorter period--1960-1970.[19] Their controversial exposition characterized the improvement in the condition of African Americans as being "revolutionary," suggesting that for the first time in history a majority of African Americans were "middle-class."

Understandably, economic status has been the predominant interest in measurements of comparative well-being and the gains and losses of African Americans. Farley and Allen allow that even in their broadly directed work,

> ... we were inextricably drawn into comparisons of relative economic status. Economic differences were highlighted by each comparison of black and white characteristics, whether the topic of primary concern was family structure, educational attainment, or health status. In a larger sense, the book came to be about the nexus of race and class in the United States. Of specific interest was the question, "What has been the economic progress of blacks relative to whites?"20

In Economic Policies and Black Progress: Myths and Realities, Hill examined several economic indicators for the 1970s and showed that the relative status of African Americans declined in that decade.[21] Among other things, the data indicated a widening of the racial gap in unemployment and the incidence of poverty. Tidwell recently looked at changes in occupational attainment in private sector employment from the mid-1960s to the mid-80s, finding significant African American advancement but continued severe underrepresentation in higher level occupations.[22]

A number of other studies have assessed the degree of economic progress since 1980. This date marked the beginning of the conservative "Reagan Era" in national government and the ascendancy of "supply side" economic policies. For example, a report by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities evidenced marked slippage in the relative income, employment, and poverty condition of African Americans under the Reagan Administration's economic recovery strategy.[23] David Swinton, writing serially in the National Urban League's annual State of Black America, has even more rigorously demonstrated the reversals African Americans have suffered since 1980. The author offered this pessimistic summary appraisal in his 1989 assessment:

> Three conclusions are apparent from the discussion to this point. First, racial inequality in economic life is still the norm throughout America. Second, the magnitude of the parity gaps is very large in all dimensions. Third, the disparities have been worsening in most dimensions for at least the past

> 10 years. If present trends continue, we can have no expectation or hope of attaining economic parity in economic life in the foreseeable future....The new administration will face the harsh reality that racial inequality persists and is not attenuating.24

The most recent comprehensive study of African American well-being was completed this year by the National Research Council.[25] Conducted over a period of more than four years and involving more than a hundred social scientists, this massive work is the most far-reaching since Myrdal's. The report, A Common Destiny: Blacks and American Society, provides voluminous data documenting the gains African Americans have experienced over the past 50 years as well as the disturbing realities of inequality in the present time. The current findings are presented with a sense of urgency similar to that found in An American Dilemma.

It is not our intention to synthesize findings from these and other relevant works. However, the following general observations should be made:

1. The importance of the time frame is clearly evident in studies of racial progress. For the most part, the use of a longer time frame generates more positive assessments of both the absolute and relative advances of African Americans.

2. Irrespective of time frame, the preponderance of data discloses continued inequalities in the well-being of African Americans and whites across the range of socioeconomic indicators examined.

3. On balance, the research shows that the past two decades have been marked by stalled progress toward racial parity. In some areas, African Americans have even lost ground relative to the position of whites.

4. With few exceptions, researchers have not sought to estimate when African Americans might gain

parity, based upon their analysis of actual change over a given time period. Such projections that are made tend to be very general and non-quantitative.

C. The Present Study: Focus and Method

Our main interest is to examine systematically the amount of time it is likely to take African Americans to realize parity status on individual indicators of socioeconomic well-being. This is admittedly a highly problematic enterprise, and thus the lack of attention to the question is understandable. To begin with, it is necessary to make a great many futuristic, untestable assumptions about general developments in the larger society. For instance, we know that the condition of the national economy is a key determinant of improvement in the economic status of African Americans. However, even from year to year, the future state of the economy is greatly speculative and subject to a wide array of influences that are uncontrollable. Consequently, estimates of parity gains (or losses) will differ depending upon one's expectations about broad exogenous forces.

Similarly, to project change on one indicator, it is necessary to take into account prospective changes on other indicators of well-being. The reason is that socioeconomic variables are so highly interrelated. For example, health status is a function of income (i.e., higher income groups tend to acquire better medical services), education (i.e., the more highly educated tend to be more aware of salutary health practices), and other factors.

In short, "futures" research is a contingency-based, hypothetical exercise in which precision and reliability are virtually impossible to achieve. While it need not be completely arbitrary, the state of science in this area is unavoidably judgmental and intuitive.[26]

Despite the constraints, we believe that futures research, even in the simplified form adopted here, can be very instructive and worthwhile. For planning and programming purposes, it should be helpful to policymakers as well as to African Americans themselves to know when parity would be achieved on a given indicator if some observed rate of change were to persist. Thus, the principal assumption of our analysis is that change will occur in the future in the same direction and at the same rate as it occurred during a specified time period in the recent past.[27] Also, it should be useful to know the degree to which the pace of change must be accelerated in order to reach parity by a given target year.[28] For our purposes, the year 2000 is the target.

The empirical analysis covers the following groups of status indicators:

- o Employment
- o Economic Development
- o Education
- o Health
- o Housing
- o Political Empowerment

For the individual indicators in each category, the specific measure used is the percentage ratio of African Americans to whites or an appropriate adaptation of this statistic. The

time period for the change analysis is 15-20 years. For the most part, the current year is 1985, while the base year varies between 1966 and 1970, depending upon the variable. Additional comments on technique are provided as the results are presented.

III. EMPLOYMENT, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND EDUCATION

The topics covered in this chapter account for most of the concern about the relative condition of African Americans. There is no question that progress toward parity must be measured principally in terms of these three categories of well-being and the status indicators they subsume.

A. Employment

As mentioned in the Introduction, African Americans are constituting a growing share of the civilian labor force. However, they continue to experience serious disadvantages in terms of the extent to which they are without work, the types of jobs they hold, and the amount of compensation they receive for their labor. Comparative unemployment rates, occupational attainment, and earnings level are thus used to assess the prospects in the employment area.

Unemployment rate. In 1967, the African American unemployment rate was about 2.2 times the rate of whites. Put differently, whites were only 45.9 percent as likely as African Americans to be jobless. By 1985, as Table 1 shows, this percentage had dropped to 43.7, indicating a widening of the unemployment gap. Based on developments in this time frame, then, African Americans might never gain labor market parity with whites, as measured by their relative unemployment rate.

Table 1

Percentage Comparison of African American and White Unemployment Rates, 1967 vs. 1985

White Rate as % of Afr-Amer 1967	1985	% change	% change per year	est. years to parity
45.9	43.7	-2.2	-0.1	NA

SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment and Earnings, January 1986, Table 5, p. 158; U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 30, "The Social and Economic Status of the Black Population in the United States: An Historical View 1790-1978," Table 47, p. 69.

The seeming intractability of disproportionate African American unemployment is easily one of the most disturbing phenomena of our times. Equally distressing is the fact that the problem is pervasive, cutting across industries, occupations, demographic subgroups, etc. None of the conventional explanations, such as human capital theory and arguments concerning the impact of structural changes in the economy, fully account for it.[29]

As recently as the first quarter of 1989, according the National Urban League's Quarterly Economic Report, the overall unemployment rate among African Americans was 2.5 times that of whites. Although the disparity was larger in the expanding services sector of the economy, the ratio was still more than 2-to-1 in the declining goods-producing sector.[30] In any case, the overall disproportionality problem has worsened beyond the 1967-85 time frame of our

change analysis. Major initiatives are necessary if this trend is to be checked. A fundamental reordering of priorities is required if African Americans are even to approximate parity status in the incidence of joblessness by the year 2000.

Occupational attainment. Improvement in their occupational distribution has been among the more positive developments in African Americans' quest for parity. In large part, concern about racial discrimination in employment has keyed on the limited representation of African Americans and other minorities in higher level, more prestigious occupations and their concentration in low status positions. Chapter VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and similar legislation barring employment discrimination as well as targeted affirmative action initiatives, such as Executive Order 11246, were adopted as means of correcting the longstanding racial imbalances. The evidence suggests that such measures have been effective, particularly among private companies accountable to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).[31]

Data in Table 2 indicate the relative proportion of African American workers in managerial and professional occupations in 1970 and 1985. They reflect a more general, long-term trend. In 1970, African Americans were less than half as likely as whites to hold a managerial or professional position. During the next fifteen years, the relative probability climbed to 57.4, or by 12 percentage points. The

gain averages out to .79 percent per year.

Table 2

Comparison of the Ratio of African Americans to Whites in Managerial and Professional Occupations, 1970 vs. 1985

Afr-Amer rate as % of White 1970	1985	% change	% change per year	est. years to parity
45.5	57.4	11.9	.79	54

SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment and Earnings, January 1986, Table 21, p. 174; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980 Census of Population, "General Social and Economic Characteristics: United States Summary," Table 89, p.1-4.5.

The gain of 12 percentage points in 15 years is significant progress. However, as we annualize this rate of improvement and assume its continuation beyond 1985, the table shows that it would take African Americans another 54 years, to the year 2039, to actually achieve parity representation in managerial and professional occupations. To reach this goal by the year 2000 would require more than a tripling of the observed pace of progress, from the average yearly increment of .79 percent to 3.5 percent. Obviously, an acceleration of this magnitude would necessitate more aggressive measures to remedy the effects of past and present discrimination in employment than are now in place.

Earnings. Paralleling the problems of unemployment and unfavorable occupational representation, African American workers historically have earned much lower salaries and

wages relative to those of their white counterparts. The overall racial disparities persist, but their magnitude is very different among the male and female segments of the workforce. African American men continue to be in a much more disadvantaged status relative to whites than are African American women. Consequently, the prospect for realizing parity in earnings level differs widely for the two groups.

In 1969, the weekly earnings of full-time African American male workers averaged 67 percent of the earnings of white male workers. The earnings ratio increased to 72.9 percent in 1985, a gain of 5.9 percent. (See Table 3) Annualized, the rate of improvement was .37 percent per year. Projected beyond 1985, therefore, nearly three-quarters of a century would elapse before the average earnings of African American male workers matched that of their white counterparts. Parity would not occur until the year 2058. To close the existing gap by the year 2000 would require speeding up the pace of progress to an average yearly gain of 1.8 percent, which is almost five times the observed change rate.

On the other hand, African American women earned 79 percent as much as white female workers in 1969, and had closed the gap by an additional 14.2 percentage points by 1985. The gain averages to an improvement rate of .89 percent per year. At that rate, African American women would be expected to achieve earnings parity in eight years, that is, by 1993. Hence, even with some considerable slowing of

the observed pace, the goal of parity by the year 2000, among women, could be attained.

Table 3

Comparison of African American to White Earnings Ratios for Full-Time Workers, 1969 vs. 1985

Afr-Amer Median Earnings as % of White 1969	1985	% change	% change per year	est. years to parity
		Males		
67.0	72.9	5.9	.37	73
		Females		
79.0	93.2	14.2	.89	8

SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment and Earnings, January 1986, Table 54, p. 210; U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, "The Social and Economic Status of the Black Population in the United States: An Historical View,1790-1978," Table 32, p. 48.

The wide divergence between the relative well-being of African American male and female workers and the corresponding parity projections deserve further comment. For one thing, it is necessary to point out that African American men typically work fewer hours than white men, while the opposite is true among women. Thus, the median weekly earnings of African American women tend to compare more favorably to the earnings of white women partly because they work a longer week. The gender difference in relative earnings narrows some when earnings are computed on an hourly basis. Nonetheless, African American women workers still fare substantially better than men vis-a-vis their white

female and male counterparts.

Second, racial differences in returns to education are greater among males than females. In other words, the earnings value of an additional amount of schooling is less for African American men, compared to its worth to white men, than it is for African American women, compared to white women. Indeed, a college education is more beneficial to African American women in dollar terms than it is to whites. According to Farley and Allen,

> Even before passage of the Civil Rights Act, black women received greater returns for their investments in college education than white women; in 1960 an additional year of college added 62 cents to the average hourly earnings of black women, or 3 cents more per hour than to the earnings of white women. By 1980 their advantage grew to 15 cents per hour for each year of college.32

Finally, African American women also gain more in increased earnings from additional years of labor market experience than do their white counterparts. As with education, African American men enjoy a lesser rate of return from labor market experience than white male workers.[33]

In any event, it is clear that bringing about earnings parity between African American and white male workers in the foreseeable future, let alone by the year 2000, will be a major challenge. The impressive long-term progress documented by Smith and Welch, whereby African American men closed the racial earnings gap by 30 percent over a 40-year period, has essentially stagnated.[34] A powerful boost of the

stalled engine of racial advancement is needed to regain the momentum.

B. Economic Development

This section examines four indicators of well-being that are associated with the more generic issue of economic development--income, poverty rates, wealth status, and business ownership. There is, of course, a degree of arbitrariness in this classification, given the interests addressed in the previous section. Unemployment rate, occupational attainment, and earnings might also be subsumed under economic development. On the other hand, often a narrower conception of economic development is employed, one emphasizing business development and ownership and the general economic viability of African American communities.[35] For convenience of exposition, the approach adopted here amounts to a middle-range view. Nonetheless, we are fully aware of the varying perspectives toward economic development as well as the strong interrelationships among the four indicators included in this category and those covered above.

Income. Income is arguably the single most illuminating measure of well-being. It is easily the most widely used. The primacy of income stems from the fact that we live in a consumption-, money-oriented society.

> Modifying the aphorism that "you are what you eat," we can conclude in this instance that "you are what you can afford." Our society is founded upon a market economy; as such, the "good life" is a commodity to be bought and sold. The basic essentials... and the elaborate enhancements...are both allocated in relation to purchasing power.[25]

> Even physical health and well-being is influenced by a person's economic standing.36

In any case, the quality of life an individual or family experiences is determined primarily by their income, from whatever sources it might be derived. The overall relative well-being of African Americans is thus well represented by the degree to which their income level converges with that of whites.

In 1967, the median income of African American families averaged about 59 percent of the income of white families. As Table 4 shows, this figure declined to 57.6 percent in 1985, or by 1.6 percentage points. Like the observed trend in unemployment rates, then, the data are gloomy with respect to the prospect of closing the racial income gap. To do so by the year 2000 would require not only reversing the existing trend, but also ensuring an average yearly reduction of 2.8 percentage points. Barring a whole complex of other propitious developments, it seems unlikely that African American families will ever realize income parity.

The possibilities are only somewhat brighter when the focus is on per capita income. In the base year, the per capita income of African Americans was 53.8 percent of white per capita income. By 1985, African Americans had moved 4.8 percentage points toward closing the remaining disparity, an average gain of .25 percent per year. However, this rate of improvement is modest, to say the least. The table indicates

that at the observed pace, parity in per capita income would not materialize for 166 years, or until the year 2151! For parity to occur by the year 2000, the observed rate of progress would have to be increased by more than eleven times, to an annualized gain of 2.8 percentage points.

As Swinton has emphasized, the declining growth in the average income of individual African American families has a tremendous aggregate impact. Based on data for 1987, Swinton estimated that African American families received about $167 billion in income that year, whereas they would have received

Table 4

Comparison of African American to White Income, 1967 vs. 1985 (in constant dollars)

Afr-Amer Income as % of White 1967	1985	% change	% change per year	est. years to parity
Family Income				
59.2	57.6	-1.6	-.08	NA
Per Capita Income				
53.8	58.6	4.8	.25	166

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-60, No. 156, "Money Income of Households, Families, and Persons in the United States: 1985," Table 11, pp. 33-36; Table 28, p. 100.

$274 billion if income parity had prevailed. "Thus, in 1987, the family income parity gap was $107 billion. This gap was almost double the $58 billion parity gap that existed in 1970....[The increase in inequality between 1970 and 1987 cost the average black family about $1,500 and cost the

community as a whole about $10.5 billion."[37] Such numbers give a sobering perspective to the overwhelming magnitude of the income problem African Americans face.

Poverty rate. If income is a singularly instructive indicator of group well-being, the incidence of poverty is perhaps the most compelling. Of course, the interface between the two measures cannot be ignored. One's income level may be so low as to constitute a poverty condition. African Americans are all too familiar with this circumstance. What do the data reveal about change in the relative incidence of poverty in recent years, and what do they suggest about the prospect of closing the racial gap?

In 1967, the poverty rate among individual African Americans was more than three and one-half times the rate among whites. Put another way, whites were only 28 percent as likely to be poor. Table 5 shows that by 1985, whites were 36 percent as likely as African Americans to be in poverty; thus the racial gap had narrowed by 8.4 percentage points. Figured on an annual basis, progress toward parity in poverty rates occurred in increments of .4 percent per year during this time. Projecting beyond 1985 at this same rate, the parity condition would not be reached for 159 years, not until the year 2144. Shortening the time frame to the year 2000 would mean improving the change factor to 4.2 percent per year. This scenario highlights the fact that the incidence of poverty among African American individuals, even with the observed decrease, remained extremely

disproportionate in 1985.

The story is worse for African American families. The percentage ratio of white-to-African American poverty rates stood at 23.9 in 1967. As of 1985, it was 32.4, closing the

Table 5

Comparison of White to African American Poverty Rates, 1967 v. 1985

White Poverty Rate as % of Afr-Amer 1967	1985	% change	% change per year	est. years to parity
		Persons		
28.0	36.4	8.4	0.4	159
		Families		
23.9	32.4	8.5	0.4	169

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-60, No. 158, "Poverty in the United States: 1985," Table 1, p. 14.

racial gap by 8.5 percentage points. Given the size of the remaining gap (67.6 percent), this yearly change rate would not put African American families at parity with whites until 2154, 169 years beyond the 1985 observation date. Parity 2000 would occur in this instance only if the observed rate of improvement were multiplied eleven-fold to 4.5 percentage points a year.

In this affluent society, no one should have to endure a poverty existence. It is a sad commentary, indeed, that we have not moved farther toward eradicating this problem since

"the other America" was discovered more than a generation ago.[38] It is doubly distressing to find that race remains such a powerful determinant.

Contrary to popular opinion, the African American poverty phenomenon is not confined to female-headed families and the subgroup generally referred to as the underclass. In recent years, the incidence of poverty has risen as rapidly among African American married-couple families as it has among female-headed families.[39] Further, African Americans comprise a disproportionate segment of the working poor. In any event, this complex problem stands in stark opposition to the goals of Parity 2000.

Wealth. As used here, the term wealth does not mean "riches." It is defined as "net worth," the difference between one's financial assets and liabilities. Wealth is a sorely neglected dimension of the relative economic well-being of African Americans.[40] As we shall see, there is an alarming contrast between the wealth status of African Americans and whites.

Although the data necessary to conduct our contemporary trend analysis are not available, O'Hare found a considerable increase in the ratio of African American-to-white wealth between 1967 and 1979, "...indicating that progress toward parity has been made. Given the starting point, however, enormous changes are required before blacks even begin to approach equality."[41] Just how far away parity is can be surmised from data collected in a recent census survey.[42] As

of 1984, the average net worth of African American households was $3,400, compared to $39,000 for white households. Thus, African Americans average less than 9 percent of the wealth of whites. In other words, for every dollar of wealth possessed by the typical white family, the typical African American family holds a mere 9 cents!

At the aggregate level, the total net worth of all U.S. households is approximately $6,830 billion. African Americans account for about $192 billion or a minuscule 2.8 percent of the total. By contrast, the aggregate net worth of white households is around $6,498 billion or 95 percent of the national total. In presenting these data elsewhere, the author pointed out that "the percentage figures differ sharply from the share of the household population each group represents. Thus, the net worth estimate for black households is more than eight percent below their proportion of the population, while the net worth of white households exceeds their population share by a comparable margin. Converted into dollar terms, black households are 'undervalued' by some $559 billion, relative to their proportion of the U.S. population."[43]

In short, parity in the wealth status of African Americans is simply not in the offing. The most one might reasonably expect is that measurable progress toward this goal might be made by the year 2000 and over the decades beyond this milestone.

Business ownership. African Americans' position in

business development is comparable to their relative wealth status. In 1982, the latest year for which data are available, the group accounted for just 2.02 percent of all U.S. business firms. This proportion is little changed from the 1.57 percent of businesses owned by African Americans in 1972.[44] Moreover, the gross receipts of these businesses amounted to less than one percent of the U.S. total in both years. It is only necessary to compare these figures with the percentage of the population that African Americans comprised to appreciate their drastic underrepresentation as business owners.

Table 6 shows the ratio of the average gross receipts of African American-owned businesses to the average gross receipts of all U.S. firms. In 1972, African American businesses averaged about 20 percent of the average gross receipts of all businesses. In 1982, the proportion was decidedly lower at 6.9. Thus, African Americans are moving away from parity as represented by this measure of economic well-being. Moreover, the magnitude of the observed change from 1972 to 1982 is striking. Even allowing for the problems of measurement in this area, the data are clear that African American businesses are marginal competitors in the nation's commerce and seem destined to remain in this condition for an indefinite time to come. Any meaningful enhancement of their overall competitive position would entail a massive infusion of assistance, both to expand the number of businesses and raise their revenue generation

capabilities.

Table 6

Comparison of Average Gross Receipts of African American Businesses with Receipts of All U.S. Firms, 1972 vs. 1982

Av.Afr-Amer Sales as % of Tot. Av. 1972	1982	% change	% change per year	est. years to parity
19.7	6.9	-12.8	-1.3	NA

SOURCE: U.S. Internal Revenue Service, Office of Statistics of Income, Telephonic Transmission of Unpublished Data, July 24, 1989.

C. Education

Research on social mobility, in general, and the advancement of African Americans, in particular, has invariably asserted the importance of education. Smith and Welch identified improved education as being the chief determinant of the economic progress African Americans achieved between 1940 and 1980, leading them to conclude that "the safest and surest route to permanent black economic mobility rests in additional education in a good school."[45] This conclusion represents the prevailing view. Thus, recent reports by the College Board, the Commission on Minority Participation in Education and American Life, and the Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship, among others, have lamented the continued inequities in the education of African American students and pressed the need to remedy them without delay.[46]

In general, the evidence indicates that African Americans have made great strides in educational achievement over time. However, it is also clear that racial parity in this area is a considerable distance away. And African Americans continue to be short-changed in converting their educational credentials into economic gain. With few exceptions, they are not likely to enjoy the same labor market benefits as do their comparably educated white counterparts.[47] Nonetheless, education variables are essential to include in any assessment of relative well-being. Here, we examine high school completion, college enrollment, and college completion rates.

High school completion. A high school education has become a necessary certification of one's ability to perform even the most rudimentary tasks in the modern workplace. In 1967, African Americans were completing high school at a rate that was about 55 percent that of whites (Table 7). By 1985, the ratio had climbed to 79.2, an impressive gain of 24 percentage points. The move toward parity represented an average yearly gain of 1.33 percentage points. Projected beyond 1985, this pace would bring about a parity condition in high school completion in 16 years, or in the year 2001. This is one of the few cases, therefore, in which the pace of progress is on target toward Parity 2000, assuming that it is maintained.

At the same time, it is necessary to point out that the dropout rate among African American high school students is

still greatly disproportionate. These youth are virtually certain to be seriously handicapped in the intensifying competition for economic security. Furthermore, the quality of education received by African American students who do finish high school is often very deficient. Racial comparisons of performance on the SAT and similar academic tests confirm this fact.[48] Nevertheless, our measurement of change in the relative likelihood of graduating from high school produced an exceptionally positive result.

Table 7

Comparison of African American to White High School Completion Rates for Persons 25 Years and Older, 1967 vs. 1985

Afr-Amer Rate as % of White 1967	1985	% change	% change per year	est. years to parity
55.2	79.2	24.0	1.33	16

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 428, "Educational Attainment in the United States: March 1987 and 1986," Table 12, pp. 74-75.

College enrollment. Next to owning a home, having a college education is perhaps the most popular conception of the American Dream. Of course, interest in this circumstance goes well beyond the symbolic significance of having a college degree. It is principally a matter of competitiveness in a changing labor market. The fact is that college educated persons are much more likely to secure the

more prestigious, better paying jobs and otherwise to have a higher standard of living. The disadvantages experienced by African Americans in this regard are well reflected in our earlier examination of disparities in economic status. The comparative data on college enrollment rates are presented in Table 8.

The ratio statistics indicate that the proportion of African Americans (age 18-24 years) enrolled in college in 1967 was 67.5 percent of the proportion of whites. This figure grew to 75.9 percent in 1985. Thus, the college enrollment gap closed by 8.4 percentage points during the period, for an average decrease of .44 percentage points per year. If this rate of relative progress were to continue, 55 years would elapse before racial parity occurs. The enrollment rate of African Americans would not match that of whites until 2040. The pace would have to be accelerated to a gain of 1.6 percentage points per year to reach parity by the year 2000.

Table 8

Comparison of African American to White College Enrollment Rates for 18-24 Year-Olds, 1967 vs. 1985

Afr-Amer Rate as % of White 1967	1985	% change	% change per year	est. years to parity
67.5	75.9	8.4	.44	55

SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics 1988, Table 150, p. 174.

College completion. Obviously, enrollment in college does not necessarily mean that a degree will be conferred. For any number of reasons (lack of financial support, poor academic performance, family obligations, etc.), many students withdraw from college and fail to graduate. There are racial differences in the incidence of such problems. Consequently, African American students have been less likely than their white counterparts to complete their college education. Completion rate is a critical indicator of group well-being in the higher education area.

In 1967, the completion rate of African American college students was about 38 percent that of whites (Table 9). By 1985, it had jumped to 55.5 percent, a gain of about 18 percentage points. Annualized, the gain amounts to 1.11 percentage points per year, which, if continued, would bring parity in 40 years (2025). Parity 2000 would be achieved if the observed change rates were to be boosted to 3.0 percentage points per year.

Table 9

Comparison of African American to White College Completion Rates for Persons 25 Years-Old and Older 1967-1985

Afr-Amer Rate as % of White				
1967	1985	% change	% change per year	est. years to parity
37.7	55.5	17.8	1.11	40

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 428, "Educational Attainment in the United States: March 1987 and 1986," Table 12, pp. 74-75.

IV. HEALTH AND OTHER AREAS

As we have seen, the prospects for achieving racial parity in the critical areas of employment, economic development, and education are generally bleak. In most instances, the pace of relative progress of African Americans, as observed from the middle 1960s to the mid-80s, would not close the remaining disparities for an inordinate amount of time into the next century, if ever. In this chapter, we examine some other areas of priority concern, beginning with health status. The discussion further illustrates the multidimensional nature of the challenge facing African Americans and the nation.

A. Health

Their state of health is an obvious and crucial indicator of a group's overall well-being. For most of their history, African Americans have lagged woefully behind whites in health status. Although the gaps have narrowed significantly over the long term, there continues to be cause for deep concern. The recent Report of the Secretary's Task Force on Black & Minority Health was an important statement to this effect.[49] Although there are many different facets of this topic, our analysis centers on two indicators of physical well-being--life expectancy and infant mortality--that are particularly useful as summary measures.

Life expectancy. The data in Table 10 indicate the

average life expectancy of African Americans relative to that of whites in 1970 and 1985. In 1970, African Americans could expect to live about 89 percent as long as whites. The percentage rose to 92.3 in 1985, for an average gain of .19 percentage points per year. Sustained at the same level beyond 1985, this rate of relative improvement would have African Americans matching whites in life expectancy in 40 years, or one generation into the 21st century (2025). The improvement rate would have to be 2.5 times the observed rate to realize parity on this measure by 2000.

Table 10

Comparison of African American to White Life Expectancy, 1970 vs. 1985

Afr-Amer LE as % of White 1970	1985	% change	% change per year	est. years to parity
89.4	92.3	2.9	.19	40

SOURCE: National Center for Health Statistics, Monthly Vital Statistics Report, Vol. 37, No. 6, Table 4, p. 15.

A more instructive assessment of African Americans' progress and prospects in life expectancy occurs when separate analyses are performed for males and females. As Table 11 shows, the racial gap closed faster among females. In 1970, the life expectancy of African American females was about 90.3 percent that of their white counterparts. By 1985, the figure stood at 93.4 percent, an increase of 3.1 percentage points, at an average increment of .20 percentage points per year. At this rate, African American females

would be expected to attain parity in life expectancy by 2017, 32 years from the observation date. This number is considerably lower than the corresponding number in Table 10 for both sexes.

By contrast, African American men could expect to live only 88.2 percent as long as white men in 1970, and this proportion grew only to 90.8 percent in 1985. The data imply that African American and white males would not share equivalent life expectancies until 2038, a time span of 53 years. Parity 2000 would be met only if the observed rate of 2.6 percentage points per year were multiplied by a factor of of 3.5.

A number of determinants contribute to the relatively slow progress in closing the life expectancy gap between African American and white men. Among these, the disproportionate incidence of homicidal death among the African American male population has commanded growing attention. Overall, African American men are six times more likely than their white counterparts to die by homicide and more than three times as likely as African American females.[50] Whatever else happens, it will be virtually impossible to achieve parity on this measure by the year 2000 if the male homicide problem persists unchecked.

Table 11

Comparison of African American and White Life Expectancy by Sex, 1970 vs. 1985

Afr-Amer LE as % of White 1970	1985	% change	% change per year	est. years to parity
Males				
88.2	90.8	2.6	.17	53
Females				
90.3	93.4	3.1	.20	32

SOURCE: National Center for Health Statistics, Monthly Vital Statistics Report, Vol. 37, No. 6, Table 4, p. 15.

Infant mortality. The high rate of homicidal death among African American men has moved to the forefront of public consciousness in recent years. However, the death rate that has consistently commanded widespread attention is infant mortality; that is, death in the first year of life. While medical advances and higher living standards have reduced the incidence of infant deaths markedly both in the general population and among African Americans, the racial gap in infant mortality stubbornly persists. Indeed, the stalled progress of African Americans in closing the gap in this area could very well be the most distressing development of the recent past.

In 1970, whites were 54.6 percent as likely as African Americans to die in the first year of life (Table 12) By 1985, the percentage had slipped to 51.1, indicating a

widening of the racial gap by 3.5 percentage points. This is a sizable deterioration in the relative condition of African Americans, which portends alarming possibilities for the furture. Achieving parity in infant mortality rates is easily among the most formidable tasks identified in the present study. The problem is uniquely fundamental, and the solution is uniquely imperative.

Table 12

Comparison of African American and White Infant Mortality Rates, 1970 vs. 1985

White IM Rate as % of Afr-Amer 1970	1985	% change	% change per year	est. years to parity
54.6	51.1	-3.5	-.23	NA

SOURCE: National Center for Health Statistics, Monthly Vital Statistics Report, Vol. 37, No. 6, Table 13, p. 39.

The causes of disproportionate infant mortality among African Americans are reasonably well understood. Three factors are particularly influential. First, there continues to be a larger proportion of African American births to women who are at greater risk of infant loss. Second, African American newborns tend to have significantly lower birth weights than white infants. Third, the timing and extent of prenatal care among African American mothers are more likely to be deficient.[51] Efforts to alleviate the inordinate death rate of African American infants clearly must concentrate on these highly deleterious conditions.

B. Housing

We suggested earlier that owning a home epitomizes the American Dream. By the same token, having free choice of residential environment is a salient principle in the American way of life. The longstanding deprivations African Americans have suffered in both respects have severely impacted their sense of overall well-being as well as the actual quality of life they experience. Thus, the two indicators we include in the housing category--homeownership and residential segregation--are especially worthwhile to examine.

Homeownership. In 1970, the homeownership rate among African Americans was approximately 65 percent of the rate among whites (Table 13). As of 1985, the ratio stood at 65 percent. Hence, during the intervening years, African American advancement toward equality in the probability of owning a home was a barely perceptible .52 percentage points, an average yearly gain of .03 percent. Projected beyond 1985, this infinitesimal rate of improvement would produce parity in the year 3148, 1,163 years from the 1985 observation date. These are almost unfathomable numbers that effectively mean parity in homeownership will not happen. For the record, however, Parity 2000 would require accelerating the computed rate by 77 times, to an annual gain of 2.3 percentage points.

Table 13

Comparison of African American to White Homeownership Rates, 1970 vs. 1985

Afr-Amer HO Rate as % of White				
1970	1985	% change	% change per year	est. years to parity
64.6	65.1	.52	.03	1,163

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Housing Reports, "American Housing Survey for the United States in 1985," Table 2.1, p. 10; U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 80, "The Social and Economic Status of the Black Population in the United States," Table 96, p. 137.

Residential segregation. The impact of legal discrimination was perhaps most dramatically manifest in the residential separation of the races. Institutional racism, as revealed in the racist policies and practices of mortgage lenders, housing developers, and real estate agents, has been equally consequential. Combined with the aversion whites have exhibited toward living in areas in which African Americans exceed or might exceed a certain number, these factors have generated and sustained telling levels of residential segregation. Contrary to popular perception, all classes of African Americans are affected. As Calmore notes,

> Another unique aspect of black residential segregation is the fact that improved black socioeconomic mobility is no guarantee of spatial mobility. Freedom to move into a white residential area of one's choice subject to ability to pay is a freedom not indicated for African Americans. This contravenes an assumption commonly held by blacks and whites that segregation is substantially determined by

the races' respective economic differences. [52]

The most penetrating investigations of changes in the degree of residential segregation have been based on the "index of dissimilarity." The highest numerical value of the index is 100, and occurs when all African Americans and all whites live in racially homogeneous areas. The minimum value is zero, indicating that residential location is completely random. The value actually observed represents the minimum proportion of the members of either race who would have to move to another area to eradicate residential segregation.[53]

Examining developments between 1960 and 1980, Farley and Allen report that the average value of the index of dissimilarity among the 25 central cities with the largest numbers of African Americans was 88 in 1960, 87 in 1970, and 81 in 1980. These numbers suggest that there was only the slightest decline in segregation levels during the 1960s, followed by a much steeper decline in the '70s. For metropolitan areas having at least 250,000 African American residents, the segregation scores were 81 in 1960, 83 in 1970, and 77 in 1980. Again, a significant diminution of segregation occurred in the 1970s. At the same time, other data reveal that the level of residential segregation of African Americans and whites in suburban areas was essentially unchanged during this ten-year period, as suburban-bound African Americans mainly replaced former white residents.[54]

Additional insights into the segregation phenomenon as it affects African Americans are possible by comparing their experience with that of other racial or ethnic groups. Thus, for 16 of the nation's largest metropolitan areas in 1980, the segregation score for African Americans was 79, as against just 48 for Hispanics and 43 for Asians. Commenting on these findings, Farley and Allen conclude that:

> ...a continuation of the trends of the 1970s will leave blacks highly segregated in the foreseeable future. That is, if the average black-white segregation score declines by five points each decade, it will take about six decades for black-white residential segregation to fall to the current level of Asian-white or Hispanic-white segregation.55

In any event, there appears to be little reason for optimism regarding further progress in reducing the high levels of African American-white residential segregation. The year 2000 is likely to find the status quo virtually unchanged.

C. Political Empowerment

Ours is not only a money-oriented society; it is also power-oriented. Although it can take many forms, the reference here is to the collective power exercised by groups seeking to advance their social and economic interests within the framework of participatory democracy--i.e., political power. Political power is, thus, not construed to mean well-being per se. It is a means through which group well-being is pursued. Legislative provisions governing the

conduct of domestic affairs, decisions about the allocation of public resources, and the development of regulations according to which rewards and benefits are distributed are all outcomes of the exercise of power in the American political process.

The historical African American experience is distinguished first and foremost by the group's limited ability to influence political outcomes favorable to its interests. It is distinguished by a condition of powerlessness--dependency upon the good will of others for one's own welfare. For a time, this condition was absolute, as African Americans were legally prohibited from participating in the formal political process. Subsequently, the disenfranchisement was effected through discriminatory applications of rules and practices regulating political participation. These constraints are largely responsible for the relative disadvantages reviewed in this report. More generally, as Cross has argued recently in a masterful exposition on this subject, the life experiences and possibilities for African Americans must be understood in power terms.[56]

What is the contemporary status of African Americans with respect to political empowerment, and what is in prospect as we approach the 21st century? It is fitting that this examination of indicators of socioeconomic well-being conclude by addressing these questions. Specifically, the discussion engages two salient aspects of political

empowerment--voter participation and office-holding.

Voter participation. The 1965 Voting Rights Act had a pronounced impact on the pattern of voter participation among African Americans and racial differences in political involvement. Comparative voter registration rates for congressional elections reflect the changes. As Table 14 shows, in 1966, immediately following passage of the Act, African Americans were 84 percent as likely as whites to register for congressional elections. By 1986, the difference in registration rates was only 2 percent, a reduction of 14 percentage points. Using our projection method, the gap might be expected to close completely in the present year, 1989.

African Americans were even less likely than whites to vote in congressional elections in 1966, but cut the difference by nearly 19 percentage points in 1986 (Table 15). According to projections, the average reduction of .94 percentage points per year would produce equivalence in congressional voting rates in nine years, that is, by 1994. According to these measures, then, the political empowerment of African Americans moved at a relatively rapid pace over the last two decades.

Table 14

Comparison of African American to White Voter Registration Rates for Congressional Elections, 1966 vs. 1986

Afr-Amer Rate as % of White 1966	1986	% change	% change per year	est. years to parity
84.1	98.0	13.9	.70	3

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 414, "Voting and Registration in the Election of November 1986," Table B, p. 2; Table D, p. 4.

Table 15

Comparison of African American to White Voting Rates in Congressional Elections, 1966 vs. 1986

Afr-Amer Rate as % of White 1966	1986	% change	% change per year	est. years to parity
73.2	91.9	18.7	.94	9

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 414, "Voting and Registration in the Election of November 1986," Table B,p. 2; Table D, p. 4.

On the other hand, it is important to note that both registration and voting rates have been declining among the general voting-age population for a number of years. Thus, only 50 percent of the eligible population voted in 1988, the lowest turnout since the elections of 1924. The implications for African Americans, whose need for judicious exercise of the franchise is particularly urgent, are ominous. Hamilton assesses the matter in lucid terms.

> Overall, survey data...suggest that blacks are as

> likely to vote as their white counterparts, and in some cases more so. The problem, however, is that the overall turnout rates are down, and what is happening is blacks are reaching parity in a shrinking area of activity! The goal in voting should not be, it seems, to aim for "parity," but to seek the goal of maximum registration and turnout.57

Political office-holding. The increased voter participation of African Americans expanded dramatically the number of African Americans elected to political office. In 1965, there were about 280 African American elected officials, at all levels of government, in the United States. Twenty years later, in 1985, the figure stood at 6,016. However, two important caveats diminish the significance of what otherwise might be appreciated as a momentous change. First, the number of African American elected officials in 1985 represented a mere 1.2 percent of all elected officials in the nation. Second, the annual rate of increase in the election of African Americans to political office plunged from a high of 26.6 percent in 1971 to single-digit percentages in the 1980s.[58] If not reversed, this development could have a devastating impact on the political empowerment of African Americans going into the next century. They simply must exploit fully all instruments of power available to them. Gaining a more equitable representation of elected officials is key.

V. TOWARD A SUMMARY INDEX OF AFRICAN AMERICA ADVANCEMENT

This report has covered a lot of ground. It has assessed progress and prospects with respect to racial parity on a number of specific indicators within several broad categories of well-being. Needless to say, many others could have been included. As will be explained in the concluding chapter, the findings are relevant to the development of public policies and the pursuit of private initiatives that might help the nation to prepare more effectively for the 21st century. This chapter discusses the need for an additional assessment device and describes a preliminary model for this purpose.

A. The Need

An unavoidable limitation of this and other comprehensive analyses of the African American condition is the difficulty of deriving a sense of the overall well-being of the group at a given time. The problem stems from the fact that the individual indicators examined invariably produce a mixed picture. Some will disclose substantial progress; others will show stagnation; while still others will indicate that reversals have occurred. Although it is commonplace to surmise a general "bottom line" from the diverse findings, the judgmental nature of such summary appraisals makes them very unreliable yardsticks for monitoring overall change over time. It would be more useful

to extrapolate a discrete numerical representation of overall well-being, which takes into account data for various individual status indicators.

As viewed here, such a summary index would provide a single objective standard (or a delimited set of standards) by which policymakers, the general public, and, indeed, African Americans themselves could understand the degree of general progress (or regress) toward racial parity. Thus, the index would generate a statistic, distilled from the often unwieldly, contradictory, and confusing compilations of statistics that presently characterize studies of African American well-being. As essential as they are, the detailed, indicator-specific figures are subject to differential use, depending upon the interests of the user. Thus, those who adhere to a conservative or even reactionary view of public policy as it concerns African Americans are able to justify their position by pointing only to data that are consistent with it. This is not necessarily an issue of misrepresentation in the conventional sense. Rather, it is a matter of self-serving selectivity in citing the empirical evidence.

In addition, African Americans themselves sometimes may be adversely affected by the tremendous constellation of numbers about their condition. The surrounding confusion could militate against their efforts to organize around and press their collective interests effectively. The question of where to start and how to focus a parity-oriented

mobilization initiative can, in the face of the uneven data, be highly problematic.

In any case, a summarizing index of African American well-being would be immensely helpful. It would offer a common way for all to know what the overall relative status of African Americans is at a given point in time, how it compares with some previous point, and whether or not progress toward general parity is occurring at an acceptable pace.

B. The Model

The index model presented here is preliminary. More technical work and deliberations on substance will be conducted to produce a refined, more expansive version that is at once methodologically and politically sound. For reference, we will call the model the "Racial Parity Index," or RPI. It is composed by selecting a set of individual percentage ratios that define the relative standing of African Americans on corresponding dimensions of well-being. These numbers are totaled and then divided by the number of indicators employed. The result is the RPI statistic.[59] The procedure may be represented formally as follows:

$$\frac{\Sigma (x_1, x_2, \ldots x_n)}{n} = \text{RPI}$$

where x is some specific measure of relative well-being and n is the total number of measures used.

For our preliminary model, the following percentage ratio measures, for 1967 and 1985, have been extracted from

the tables in the preceding chapters:

Measure	Value	
	1967	1985
o White unemployment rate as % of Afr-American	45.9	43.7
o Afr-American median family income as % of white	59.2	57.6
o White poverty rate (persons) as % of Afr-American	28.0	36.4
o Afr-American high school completion as % of white	55.2	79.2
o Afr-American college enrollment rate as % of white	67.5	75.9

These measures were selected because they have the same base year and current year. Also, as was mentioned previously, the employment, economic development, and education categories are especially prominent among the concerns about African American well-being. The RPI

Table 16

Illustrative Racial Parity Index (RPI) Estimates, 1967 and 1985

Year	(a) Ratio Measure Values	(b) Sum of Ratio Measure Values	(c) RPI Statistic (b/5)
1967	45.9, 59.2, 28.0, 55.2, 67.5	255.8	51.2
1985	43.7, 57.6 36.4 79.2, 75.9	235.2	47.1

For 1967, the RPI estimate is 51.2. By itself, this figure is not particularly informative. It is when one compares it with the estimate for 1985 that it becomes meaningful. As can be seen, the RPI for 1985 is lower by 4.1 percent. In other words, overall, African Americans lost ground in the quest for racial parity during the 15-year period. This finding accords with what has generally been inferred; however, it was derived in a much more quantitative way than is usually the case with summary assessments. The RPI statistic for 1985 can be compared objectively with that for any other year, past or future, to measure change in the direction and/or pace of African American well-being vis-a-vis that of whites.

Our[1] preliminary model assigns equal weight to the selected ratio measures. However, this is not a requirement of the technique. Measures may easily be weighted differentially, depending upon their perceived importance in the larger scheme of things. For example, one might argue that high school completion should not be regarded as having the same importance as income level. Whether and to what extent allowances are made for relative priorities are essentially political, as opposed to technical, decisions. In any event, our refinement of the model will incorporate a weighting procedure.

C. The Application

The utility of the RPI or some similar device has already been intimated. It should be treated as a routine

way to educate and update the public on the well-being of African Americans, using the news media as the primary communications method. Otherwise, African American organizations involved in advocacy and policy development should use the RPI as a basic reference in these efforts. The critical issue is whether the index is moving in the right direction and, if so, whether the rate of change is acceptable. Finally, public policymakers should adopt the index as an aid to reassessing the efficacy of current initiatives and formulating new strategies to achieve express objectives toward eliminating racial inequalities. For example, following our projection procedure, we estimate that to close the overall racial parity gap as of 1985 by the year 2000, the RPI would have to grow at an annualized rate of 3.5 percentage points. The question is what policy actions are necessary to secure this rate of improvement.

VI. PRODUCING PARITY: PUBLIC POLICY AND PRIVATE INITIATIVE

Measured overall or in terms of individual indicators of well-being, the socioeconomic progress of African Americans is at best in a stalled state. To be sure, the present analysis has revealed a few welcome signs of sustained advancement that augur well for the years and decades ahead. The extent to which African Americans have narrowed the racial gap in high school completion rates, for example, is encouraging. Similarly, gains in the area of electoral activity clearly have been impressive. No doubt, other measurements, not performed in this study, would also produce gratifying results regarding what has transpired and the possibility of further improvement.

For the most part, however, the story here, like the accounts in other recent investigations, is distressing. The upshot is that parity for African Americans is a distant, elusive goal. The prospect is that the nation's viability in meeting its domestic needs and contending with the mounting forces of international competition will be dangerously undermined if the projections we have presented hold. The challenge is to reignite the stalled engine of racial progress before the problem becomes insurmountable. In this concluding chapter, we elaborate on the concern and offer recommendations for proceeding to complete the unfinished business of achieving racial equality.

A. Lessons from the Past

The long-term advancement of African Americans has been characterized by contrasting periods of improvement, stagnation, and reversal. Even in the past generation, one observes distinct highs and lows. Thus, the data indicate that the period between the mid-1960s and early '70s was exceptionally rewarding. African American gains, both relatively and absolutely, were pronounced and widespread. By contrast, from the early '70s to the early '80s, the sanguine pace of the previous period was arrested. Many of the earlier gains were negated altogether or seriously eroded. Since this time, broad based progress has not been in evidence, and there is good reason to be skeptical about the stability of such advances as have occurred. Clearly, there are important lessons to be learned from developments in our recent past.

It is beyond the scope of this report to provide an indepth explanation of the pattern of progress, regress, and stagnation to which we have alluded. Many complex factors are involved, and not all of them are completely understood. However, it is important to comment upon the basic conditions that promoted the marked advancement of African Americans in the earlier part of the generation. A broad consensus on these conditions emerges from empirical studies.[60] They include the following:

o A strong, growing national economy with low

inflation.

- o A political consensus favoring the socioeconomic advancement of disadvantaged minorities.
- o Aggressive, adequately funded initiatives on the part of government and the private sector to alleviate racial disparities in opportunity and well-being.
- o An intense determination of African Americans and other minorities to pursue ameliorative efforts on their own behalf.

It would be an oversimplification to suggest that the attainment of racial parity merely requires replicating these conditions. However, there is no disputing the assertion that parity will not occur in their absence. Having a prosperous economy in which opportunity expands for all citizens is an overriding prerequisite. The historical record is clear that African Americans have been inordinately hardpressed to improve their relative status, in virtually any area of well-being, under sluggish economic conditions.

The state of the general economy, while crucial in its own right, also heavily determines the extent to which the other facilitating conditions exist--in particular, the auspicious political sentiment and the disposition to undertake the initiatives necessary to relieve African American disadvantages. The Congressional Task Force on the Future of African Americans is realistic about this linkage:

> If African-Americans are to be brought into real equality with European-Americans, something vastly more powerful and sustained than anything in the American past will have to be done. And such a new approach would be likely to be met with great

resistance in the absence of strong sustained economic growth...61

Finally, there can be no doubt about the importance of the African American community's own initiative. Thus, legalized discrimination might still describe the society today had African Americans not concentrated their energies and pressed the cause of racial justice. Similarly, their tradition of self-help and mutual support has been indispensable to the efforts of African Americans to progress against the odds.

B. Perils of the Present

How do present conditions compare to the productive environment of 25 years ago? An indepth answer to this question, too, is beyond our purview. Nonetheless, several general observations are appropriate to make. First, with respect to the nation's economy, the current situation is far from optimum. By some measures, the economy is healthy, especially in the wake of the devastating recessions that occurred in the 1970s and the first part of this decade. For example, overall unemployment rates have declined sharply since the recession of 1981-82, and African Americans have shared in the benefits. However, as we have seen, the racial gap in unemployment has widened. In addition, a disproportionate number of African American workers have had to accept jobs at far lower wages than they enjoyed before the downturn.

More importantly, the federal budget deficit is

alarmingly high. Indeed, many observers believe that the "economic recovery" of the last few years is mainly the result of deficit spending, and that the gravity of the problem portends another major recession in the near future. Whether or not this forecast is correct, the fact is that the deficit has become a severe liability. At this writing, as the Administration and the Congress seek to resolve the immensely costly savings and loan crisis, a much larger budget deficit problem looms. The stakes for African Americans are profound.

Second, the political mood is distinctly less sympathetic toward the disadvantaged condition of African Americans now than in years past. Particularly since 1980, we have witnessed a widespread, systematic promulgation of the view that the society is now "color-blind" and has met its constitutional obligations to ensure equality of opportunity for all. The persisting disadvantages of African Americans are thus attributed to their own shortcomings--i.e., lack of motivation, dysfunctional social values, etc. Such failings are most acutely manifest, the view holds, among that amorphous segment of African Americans popularly referred to as the "underclass." These misguided positions have been much more than fodder for intellectual discourse. To the contrary, they have contoured public policy and government initiative in fundamental ways.

The most compelling case in point is the broad scale assault against affirmative action waged by the previous national administration and, more recently, a regressive

series of Supreme Court decisions. In combination, the Court's rulings severely contract the scope of equal opportunity legislation as codified in Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Without compensating legislation, the decisions threaten to have far-reaching, adverse repercussions on the future advancement of African American. In short, the prevailing political sentiment has swung away from commitment to racial progress, a development that puts the nation as a whole in serious jeopardy.

Third, and linked to both the fragile state of the economy and the resurgent conservatism on social issues, the national government has drastically curtailed its role in supporting the well-being of African Americans and other disadvantaged groups. The retrenchment has taken the form of precipitous reductions in spending on targeted domestic programs as well as a growing reticence to provide the creative and moral leadership that might engender more private initiative. Rationalized by the need for "fiscal responsibility" and dictated by a neoconservative political ideology, the changes are in fundamental conflict with the legitimate interests of African Americans. They also betray a disserving, short-sighted view of the nation's interests. Failure to invest adequately in the nation's human resources now could have irreversible consequences for the nation's future.

Finally, while the spirit of self-help and mutual support still runs deep among African Americans, there have been

developments within the African American community that could seriously hinder movement toward the parity goal. In particular, the problem of intra-group homicide and the more general phenomenon of crime in the African American community continue to occur with inordinate frequency. Even more disturbing is the incidence of violent crimes involving African American youth. Illicit drug trafficking and abuse have become paramount concerns in this regard. Their effects are blatantly detrimental and pervasive. Similarly, the disproportionate incidence of teenage pregnancy among African Americans frustrates the realization of human potential and prevents too many youth from taking advantage of such promising opportunities as are available. In combination, these circumstances are a real and present danger to future well-being that simply must be removed.

C. Prescriptions for the Future

Many of the prescriptions for a brighter future for both African Americans and the society at large are implied in the discussion above. Most importantly, what is required is a national recommitment to the ideal of racial justice and such reordering of national priorities as might be necessary to bring it about.[62] Thus, we all must realize that the continuing disadvantages of African Americans is, indeed, a matter of national security and work in concert to overcome them as expeditiously as possible. The government, the private sector, and the African American community itself must forge a new partnership dedicated to this end.

As most of the concern about the relative well-being of African Americans, directly or indirectly, is linked to their experiences in the areas of employment, economic development, and education, the following general recommendations concentrate on these priority areas. Otherwise, we intend to share in the effort of leaders in the policymaking arena, the corporate sector, and the African American community to derive from the larger set of findings definitive ameliorative initiatives on behalf of Parity 2000.

- Both the government and the private sector must pursue policies that are necessary to strenghen the national economy and promote sound, balanced growth, such conditions being needed to expand opportunity for all Americans.

- More vigorous efforts must be undertaken to eliminate racial discrimination in employment. Enforcement of existing antidiscrimination laws must be intensified and such new legislation should be enacted as might be necessary to secure employment rights for African Americans.

- There must be more substantial support to assist the expansion of African American business enterprise. Measures must be taken by the Congress to counteract the adverse impact of the recent Supreme Court decision involving minority set-asides.

- Through tax incentives and other urban development strategies, a concentrated program to revitalize economically depressed urban areas must be mounted and sustained.

- There must be a more comprehensive and targeted effort to improve the education of African American students in the elementary and secondary grades. This effort should be an ongoing collaboration between government institutions, private corporations, and African American organizations having special capabilities in this area.

- All qualified and interested African American students must be assured the opportunity of receiving a college education. In particular, it is crucial that grants-in-aid be restored as the primary form of financial assistance, as oposed to loans.

NOTES

1. Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1968.

2. For example, see, One-Third of A Nation. Washington, D.C.:Commission on Minority Participation in Education and American Life, 1988; William B. Johnston and Arnold H. Packer. Workforce 2000: Work and Workers for the 21st Century. Indianapolis, In.: Hudson Institute, 1987. Also, John E. Jacob. "Change, Challenge, and Choice: African Americans and Workforce 2000." Statement submitted to the House Committee on Education and Labor. Washington, D.C., June 14, 1989.

3. U.S. Bureau of the Census. Current Population Reports. "Projections of the Population of the United States, by Age, Sex, and Race: 1988-2080," Series P-25, No. 1018. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1989, Table 1, p. 10.

4. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Projections 2000. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1988, Table 1, p. 18.

5. Op. cit., p. 2.

6. An excellent account is found in C. Vann Woodward. The Strange Career of Jim Crow. New York: Oxford University Press, 1966.

7. Of course, no statement on racial equality is more famous than Dr. King's speech, "I Have A Dream," delivered at the March on Washington on August 28, 1963.

8. For relevant discussion, see, Louis L. Knowles & Kenneth Prewitt, eds. Institutional Racism in America. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969. Also, Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton. Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America. New York: Vintage Books, 1967.

9. The parity issue was brought to the forefront of public discussion by John E. Jacob, who, on behalf of the National Urban League, has challenged the nation to bring parity to African Americans by the year 2000. See his "Keynote Address," as delivered at the National Urban League Annual Conference in Detroit, Michigan, July 31, 1988.

10. Gunnar Myrdal. An American Dilemma. New York: Harper, 1944.

11. Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, op. cit.

12. 1988 Commission on the Cities. "Race and Poverty in the United States--and What Should Be Done," in Fred R. Harris & Roger W. Wilkins, eds. Quiet Riots: Race and Poverty in the United States. New York: Pantheon Books, 1988, pp. 172-184.

13. Ibid., p. 184.

14. Reynolds Farley. Blacks and Whites: Narrowing the Gap? Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984.

15. Reynolds Farley and Walter R. Allen. The Color Line and the Quality of Life in America. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1987.

16. Ibid., p. 410.

17. James P. Smith and Finis R. Welch. Closing the Gap: Forty Years of Economic Progress for Blacks. Santa Monica, Ca.: Rand Corporation, 1986.

18. Ibid., p. 7.

19. Ben J. Wattenberg and Richard M. Scammon. "Black Progress and Liberal Rhetoric." Commentary, April 1973.

20. Op. cit., p. 409.

21. Robert B. Hill. Economic Policies and Black Progress: Myths and Realities. Washington, D.C.: National Urban League Research Department, 1981.

22. Billy J. Tidwell. Black Employment in the Private Sector: A Twenty-Year Assessment. Washington, D.C.: National Urban League Research Department, 1988.

23. Still Far from the Dream: Recent Developments in Black Income, Employment, and Poverty. Washington, D.C.: Center On Budget and Policy Priorities, 1988.

24. David H. Swinton. "Economic Status of Black Americans," in Janet Dewart, ed. The State of Black America 1989. New York: National Urban League, Inc., 1989, pp. 35-36.

25. Gerald David Jaynes and Robin M. Williams, Jr., eds. A Common Destiny: Blacks and American Society. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1989.

26. For worthwhile discussions of this methodology--its applications, shortcomings, etc.--see Jib Fowles, ed. Handbook of Futures Research. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1978. Also, Harold A. Linstone. Futures Research: New Directions. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., Advanced Book Program, 1977.

27. The analysis also adopts assumptions similar to those the Bureau of Labor Statistics follows in performing labor market projections, including the assumption that no major war and no significant change in the size of the Armed Forces will occur. See, Bureau of Labor Statistics. BLS Handbook of Methods. Vol.1. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1982.

28. A number of interesting projections to the year 2000, based on alternative scenarios, are provided in The Future of African-Americans to the Year 2000. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Task Force on the Future of African-Americans, 1988.

29. Billy J. Tidwell. The Black Unemployed: A Disaggregation Analysis. Washington, D.C.: National Urban League Research Department, 1986; William A. Darity. "The Human Capital Approach to Black-White Earnings Inequality: Some Unsettled Questions." The Journal of Human Resources. Vol. 17, No. 1 (1982), pp. 74-93.

30. Monica L. Jackson, ed. The Quarterly Economic Report on the African American Worker. Report No. 20 (May 1989).

31. Tidwell. Black Employment in the Private Sector..., op. cit.

32. The Color Line..., p. 334.

33. Ibid., p. 334.

34. Closing the Gap..., Section II.

35. For example, see William F. Haddad and G. Douglas Pugh, eds. Black Economic Development. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.:Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1969; Fluornoy A. Coles, Black Economic Development. Chicago: Nelson Hall, 1975.

36. Farley and Allen, op. cit., p. 3.

37. Swinton, op. cit., p. 13.

38. Michael Harrington. The Other America. New York: Macmillan, 1962.

39. Still Far from the Dream..., p. 4.

40. See Billy J. Tidwell. Beyond the Margin: Toward Economic Well-Being for Black Americans. Washington D.C.: National Urban League Research Department, 1987.

41. William P. O'Hare. Wealth and Economic Status: A Perspective on Racial Inequality. Washington, D.C.: Joint Center for Political Studies, 1983, p. 17.

42. U.S. Bureau of the Census. Current Population Reports. Household Wealth and Asset Ownership: 1984. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1986.

43. Beyond the Margin..., pp. 18-19.

44. U.S. Bureau of the Census. 1982 Survey of Minority-Owned Business Enterprises: Black. Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1985.

45. Op. cit., p. 111.

46. Equality and Excellence: The Educational Status of Black Americans. New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1985; One Third of a Nation...; The Forgotten Half: Pathways to Success for America's Youth and Young Families. Washington, D.C.: William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship, 1988. Also, The Urban League Review. Special Edition. "Black Education: A Quest for Equity and Excellence." Vol. 11, Nos. 1&2.

47. Darity, op. cit.

48. Equality and Excellence..., op. cit.

49. Report of the Secretary's Task Force on Black & Minority Health. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1985.

50. National Center for Health Statistics, Vital Statistics of the United States 1984. Vol. II--Mortality, Part A. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1987. Table 1-24, pp. 232-243.

51. Cf. Farley and Allen, op. cit., pp. 50-52.

52. John O. Calmore. "To Make Wrong Right: The Necessary and Proper Aspirations of Fair Housing," in Janet Dewart, ed. The State of Black America 1989. New York: National Urban League, Inc., 1989, p. 95.

53. Karl E. Taeuber. "Residential Segregation." Scientific American. Vol. 213 (August 1965), pp. 12-19; Karl E. Taeuber and Alma F. Taeuber. Negroes in Cities. Chicago: Aldine, 1965.

54. Farley and Allen, op. cit., pp.139-145.

55. Ibid., p. 145.

56. Theodore Cross. The Black Power Imperative: Racial Inequality and the Politics of Nonviolence. New York: Faulkner Books, 1987. See, also, Carmichael and Hamilton, op. cit.

57. Charles V. Hamilton. "On Parity and Political Empowerment," in Janet Dewart, ed. The State of Black America 1989, op. cit., p.114.

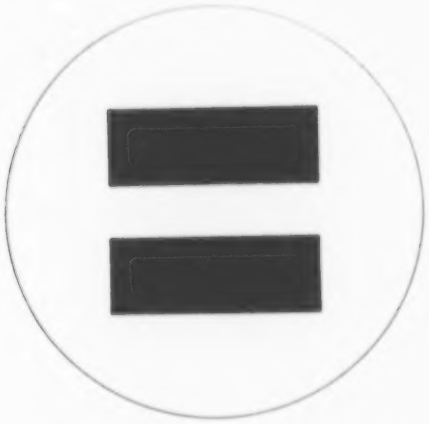
58. Black Elected Officials: A National Roster. Washington, D.C.: Joint Center for Political Studies, 1985.

59. A similar approach has been described by Cross, focussing on economic status. The RPI encompasses a mix of status categories, and is the first such model to be put to use. See Cross, op. cit., pp. 621-627.

60. Cf. One Third of A Nation, op. cit.

61. The Furture of African-Americans to the Year 2000, op. cit., p. 5.

62. Black Americans and Public Policy: Perspectives of the National Urban League. New York: National Urban League, Inc., 1988.



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